

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-22 (canceled)

Claim 23 (currently amended): An information processing apparatus, which is coupled to a plurality of other information processing apparatuses through a network, transmitting a software cell including a command, a program and data to the other information processing apparatuses, and carrying out network distributed processing, the information processing apparatus including a master/slave status, the information processing apparatus comprising:

capability exchange means for collecting information regarding resources and operating statuses of the other information processing apparatuses and creating an apparatus information table by transmitting software cells to all the other information processing apparatuses on the network, wherein the apparatus information table includes apparatus data associated with all the other information processing apparatuses when the information processing apparatus is in a master status and wherein the apparatus information table includes identifications associated with all the other information processing apparatuses and the master/slave statuses associated with all the other information processing apparatuses on the network when the information processing apparatus is in a slave status, the software cells requesting transmissions of information regarding the other information processing apparatuses, and by receiving software cells as replies from the other information processing apparatuses, the capability exchange means further exchanging information regarding capability with the other information processing apparatuses by transmitting the software cell including information regarding own apparatus as the reply to the other information processing apparatus if the information processing apparatus receives the software cell requesting the transmission of information regarding the information processing apparatus from the other information processing apparatus;

apparatus specifying means for comparing information regarding a resource required to execute a function program, with information regarding the resource and the operating status in the apparatus information table, and specifying one of the information processing apparatuses capable of executing the function program if the function program retained in the information processing apparatus is executed; and

processing requesting means for transmitting a software cell requesting an execution of the function program to the information processing apparatus specified in the apparatus specifying means.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus according to claim 23, wherein:

the capability exchange means, if another information processing apparatus is connected to the network, collects information regarding a resource and an operating status of the other information processing apparatus and updates the apparatus information table.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The information processing apparatus according to claim 23, wherein:

the other information processing apparatus has a plurality of processors for processing the function program; and

the capability exchange means collects information regarding a resource and an operating status of each of the plurality of processors, and saves these information in the apparatus information table.

Claim 26 (currently amended): An information processing method for causing an information processing apparatus having a master/slave status, which is coupled to a plurality of other information processing apparatuses through a network, to transmit a software cell including a command, a program and data to the other information processing apparatuses, and carry out network distributed processing, the information processing method comprising:

collecting information regarding resources and operating statuses of the other information processing apparatuses and creating an apparatus information table by transmitting software cells to all the other information processing apparatuses on the network, wherein the apparatus information table includes apparatus data associated with the other information processing

apparatuses when the information processing apparatus is in a master status and wherein the apparatus information table includes identifications associated with the other information processing apparatuses and the master/slave statuses associated with the other information processing apparatuses on the network when the information processing apparatus is in a slave status, the software cells requesting transmissions of information regarding the other information processing apparatuses, and by receiving software cells as replies from the other information processing apparatuses, further exchanging information regarding capability with the other information processing apparatuses by transmitting the software cell including information regarding own apparatus as the reply to the other information processing apparatus if the information processing apparatus receives the software cell requesting the transmission of information regarding the information processing apparatus from the other information processing apparatus;

comparing information regarding a resource required to execute a function program, with information regarding the resource and the operating status in the apparatus information table, and specifying one of the information processing apparatuses capable of executing the function program if the function program retained in the information processing apparatus is executed; and

transmitting a software cell requesting an execution of the function program to the information processing apparatus specified.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The information processing method according to claim 26, further comprising collecting information regarding a resource and an operating status of the other information processing apparatus and updating the apparatus information table, if another information processing apparatus is connected to the network.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The information processing method according to claim 26, further comprising collecting information regarding a resource and an operating status of each of the plurality of processors, and saving the information in the apparatus information table, wherein the other information processing apparatus has a plurality of processors for processing the function program.

Claim 29 (currently amended): An information processing system in which one information processing apparatus having a master/slave status and another information processing apparatus having a master/slave status are coupled through a network and network distributed processing is carried out by transmitting a software cell including a command, a program and data to the other information processing apparatus, the one information processing apparatus comprising:

capability exchange means for collecting information regarding resources and operating statuses of the other information processing apparatuses and creating an apparatus information table by transmitting software cells to all the other information processing apparatuses on the network wherein the apparatus information table includes apparatus data associated with the other information processing apparatuses when the one information processing apparatus is in a master status and wherein the apparatus information table includes identifications associated with the other information processing apparatuses and the master/slave statuses associated with the other information processing apparatuses on the network when the one information processing apparatus is in a slave status, the software cells requesting transmissions of information regarding the other information processing apparatuses, and by receiving software cells as replies from the other information processing apparatuses, the capability exchange means further exchanging information regarding capability with the other information processing apparatuses by transmitting the software cell including information regarding own apparatus as the reply to the other information processing apparatus if the information processing apparatus receives the software cell requesting the transmission of information regarding the information processing apparatus from the other information processing apparatus;

apparatus specifying means for comparing information regarding a resource required to execute a function program, with information regarding the resource and the operating status in the apparatus information table, and specifying one of the information processing apparatuses capable of executing the function program if the function program retained in the information processing apparatus is executed; and

processing requesting means for transmitting a software cell requesting an execution of the function program to the information processing apparatus specified in the apparatus specifying means.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The information processing system according to claim 29, wherein:

the capability exchange means of the one information processing apparatus, if further another information processing apparatus is connected to the network, collects information regarding a resource and an operating status of the other information processing apparatus and updates the apparatus information table.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The information processing system according to claim 29, wherein:

the other information processing apparatus has a plurality of processors for processing the function program; and

the capability exchange means of the one information processing apparatus collects information regarding a resource and an operating status of each of the plurality of processors, and saves these information in the apparatus information table.